

# ***The Electric Mercury***

**U.S. Army Medical Command Electronic News Summary, May 2003**

**For more on these and other important stories, see May 2003 printed issue of The Mercury.  
This is a service of the Public Affairs Office, Headquarters MEDCOM.**

## **Medics support Operation Iraqi Freedom**

Army forces liberating Iraq receive full medical support from combat medics, forward surgical teams, a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, combat support hospitals, hospitals in Europe and the U.S., and detachments with allied skills, both active and reserve. The 212th MASH drives 78 hours, 300 miles into Iraq, sets up in a sandstorm, then sees 300 patients and does 49 surgeries in two weeks. A photo of medic PFC Joseph Dwyer, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, carrying an injured child, appears in media around the world. Other AMEDD members detect environmental hazards, ensure safe food and water, etc. Many deploying personnel are replaced in stateside hospitals by reservists. TRICARE absorbs new reserve component family patients. (with photos)

## **Chitosan bandage will save lives in battle**

Shrimp-shell chitin, turned into chitosan dressings, forms a seal that can stop uncontrolled bleeding, the cause of most combat deaths. They can keep casualties alive till they reach surgery, after which almost all survive. The dressings can withstand blunt force, inclement weather, temperatures, rugged terrain. They also kill germs. After expedited tests, a thousand chitosan bandages were shipped overseas and an order for 20,000 more was placed. The Army's other hemostatic dressing, a fibrin bandage, may still prove the best choice for internal use.

## **Many nations assist Afghan relief efforts**

Sometimes the bullets in a war are not made out of lead. Sometimes "shooting" medical supplies, school supplies and hope works better. Some 48 allied lands are helping with nation-building in Afghanistan. Kuwait provides vehicles, supplies, medical help, and reconstruction personnel. Spain offers humanitarian help, search-and-rescue helicopters, transport airplanes, an engineer group to rebuild bridges and facilities, explosive ordnance disposal, and troops for the international security force. A Jordanian field hospital has treated over 165,000 patients. The Jordanians also help in local clinics and teach local medical people. A Jordanian mine-clearing unit has cleared over 280,000 square meters. The Republic of Korea has also sent medical elements, plus engineering expertise, air and naval transportation, and humanitarian assistance.

## **Hand-washing, less travel help protect against SARS**

DoD advises military and civilian personnel to take precautions against Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, especially when traveling in the Far East. SARS raises concerns about deploying forces, but to date there are no reported SARS cases in DoD. Pacific Command allows only mission-essential trips to China and Hong Kong. Most SARS victims recover fully. Wash hands often, avoid people with flu-like symptoms, and see a doctor if you feel sick, have flu-like symptoms and have associated with someone who's been to the Far East.

Other important stories in this month's edition of the *Mercury* include:

- What a difference a month makes, writes LTG James B. Peake, Army Surgeon General and MEDCOM Commander. Today our forward surgical teams, chemically protected DEPMEDS and aid-station shelters, fibrin bandages, 91W medics, etc., are forward in a battle zone. Peake also pays tribute to recently deceased BG Lillian Dunlap, retired chief of the Army Nurse Corps.
- Two changes make it easier for Reserve Component family members to receive TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Prime Remote health-care coverage when their sponsors are activated.
- Army Reserve launches centralized Army Reserve Clinical Credentialing Affairs program at Fort McPherson, Ga., to resolve problems in clinical credentialing of Reserve practitioners.
- Supplying medications, filling prescriptions and preparing IV fluids are among many jobs the 48th Combat Support Hospital pharmacy department does for troops and Afghan civilians.
- DoD health officials are moving to satisfy customer demands for better obstetrics care, e.g., letting children attend clinic visits with expectant mothers or providing day care, better parking, more ultrasound tests, more provider continuity, and easier, more flexible appointment options.
- 2002 Army Pharmacy Awards go to CPT Ricardo Nannini, Madigan Army Medical Center; SFC William S. Taylor, MEDDAC-Japan; Hal Phillips, Fort McPherson, Ga., Army Health Clinic; LTC Robert Massey, Walter Reed Army Medical Center; MAJ Steve Ford, Fort Hood, Texas, MEDDAC; Julia Greene, Fort Knox, Ky., MEDDAC; LTC Marc Caouette, Army Medical Materiel Agency; SPC William Ward, Womack Army Medical Center; CPT Eugene Handza, 352nd Combat Support Hospital; MSG Eddie Thompson, 2290th U.S. Army Hospital.
- Fort Leavenworth, Kan., MEDDAC receives Army Surgeon General's Award for 2002. Fort Carson, Colo., MEDDAC is designated Army's Benchmark Hospital for the "Respect for Patient Preferences Dimension of Care." TRICARE Management Activity honors Fort Riley, Kan., and Fort Leavenworth, Kan., MEDDACs for their websites.
- COL John Uhorchak, West Point, N.Y., MEDDAC, gets one of four "Pride In The Profession" Awards from American Medical Association Foundation. MAJ Richard Malish, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vicenza, Italy, and MAJ Joshua S. Rotenberg, Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, were among 75 young doctors and medical students to get the foundation's Leadership Award.
- Photos: soldiers in Korea test camouflage facepaint with DEET to repel insects; medical platoon, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, exchanges information with a platoon from the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force's Eastern Army 102nd Field Hospital at Camp Asaka, Japan.
- MEDCOM customer-service expert Mike Meines explores the reasons for providing good customer service, in the fourth article of his series about the customer-service ethic.
- Commentary: "Soldiers who reach limits need to get help," by PFC Jason L. Johnson, describes how he defeated depression by getting help; "Hail the troops, but don't forget everyday heroes," by Harry Noyes, reminds us that many heroes worthy of our respect never get on TV.
- A comprehensive health-and-fitness resource is only a mouse click away, writes U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine expert COL Christine H. Inouye.